

MINUTES

Watauga Soil & Water Conservation District

971 West King Street, Boone NC 28607

August 26, 2026

Present:

Denny Norris, Chair
Nate Coppenbarger
Bill Moretz
David Tucker

Michelle Kasey
Brian Bonville
Samantha Glass
Brandon Turrington

Jenny Hanifan
Gina Hodges
Elise McLaughlin
Anneliese Daugherty

1. Denny Norris called meeting to order at 8:05 a.m.

2. Jennifer Hanifan opened the meeting in prayer.

3. Ethics Awareness and Conflict of Interest Reminder:

In accordance with the State Government Ethics Act, it is the duty of every board member to avoid both conflicts of interest and appearances of conflict. Does any board member have any conflicts of interest or appearances of conflict with respect to any matters coming before the board today? If so, please identify the conflict or appearances of conflict and refrain from any undue participation in the particular matter involved.

4. Statement of Professionalism:

Supervisors are reminded of their responsibility to uphold the laws of the United States and North Carolina and their constitutions. Business is to be conducted in a professional manner, free of bias, of interactions that violate policies or individual liberties and that address business issues only. Interactions are to be held with integrity, courtesy, honesty and in compliance with the highest ethical standards.

5. Approval of the minutes

Jennifer Hanifan made a motion to approve the minutes; David Tucker 2nd the Motion. Minutes approved.

6. Approval of the agenda

Bill Moretz made a motion to approve agenda with changes. Jennifer Hanifan 2nd the motion. Agenda approved.

7. RCW camper, Anneliese Daugherty report to the Board

8. District Report: Brian Bonville

Ranking: Ranking forms were distributed to Board Members. David Tucker asked about the procedure put in place to break a tie.

Impaired and Impacted – no applicants for current year. Scott's farm received funds last season. Engineer is drawing plans. Cooperator can apply for supplement.

StRAP – No funding from the state has been confirmed.

CCAP – Top six applicants get submitted to the State. Top six must be submitted to the State by 9/30/26. Total funds are \$100,000. There are only 25 projects submitted across the State. Jennifer Hanifan asked if the government applications should go last and let the citizen applications go first. Discussion followed. Bonville stated that the State decides which projects from our submissions. Elise McLaughlin stated that maybe more people would derive benefits from the government applications; that maybe selecting the project that the highest number of citizens would be impacted should be the tie breaker. After a brief discussion, it was decided to go with the rankings as they stand. Bonville stated that most of the CCAP applicants had also applied for StRAP. StRAP may cover what CCAP doesn't.

Nate Coppenbarger made a motion to accept rankings as it. Jennifer Hanifan 2nd the motion.

Rankings to stand as is.

AgWrap – Bonville stated that both projects are for wells. The cooperators may have to apply for supplements as the funds may not cover the full amounts.

David Tucker made a motion to approve as ranked. Nate Coppenbarger 2nd the motion. Motion carried. Project rankings approved.

New Applications: None

Contracts needing approval: None

Contract Updates:

A. ACSP:

95-2023-003 Ronnie Joe Brown – Monitoring Construction to be done by Fall.

95-2024-003 Charles Norris – Reapplied for 2027.

95-2024-006 Valley View Land Company – Waiting on receipts to submit RFP.

95-2026-006 Valley View Land Company – Supplement. Waiting on receipts.

95-2024-007 Al Zimmerman – work to begin in September. Meeting with Zimmerman 8/28/26.

95-2025-001 Will Kulczyk – Monitoring construction should be complete this fall.

95-2026-003 Will Kulczyk – Supplement Added 180' of road.

95-2025-002 Holland Whitesides – Waiting on reimbursement.

95-2026-002 Holland Whitesides – Supplement. Waiting on division approval.

95-2025-003 Larry Kitchens – Cooperator needs to sign NC2 & NC11.

95-2025-004 Diane Deal – Waiting on construction to begin.

95-2026-001 Moretz – Working with Andrew Cox on JAA designs for livestock exclusions and spring tank repair on 8/28/26.

AgWrap updates:

95-2026-801 Daniel Brown - 8/28/26 work with Andrew Cox on JAA designs.

95-2026-802 Daniel Brown – Spring development. Bonville to work with Andrew Cox on designs on 8/28/26. Property at Mast Gap.

C. CCAP updates:

95-2022-502 Blue Ridge Conservancy – Monitoring construction.

95-2024-501 New River Conservancy (at Green Valley Park) – waiting on division engineer response to contractor supplied topographic maps. Extension granted.

95-2025-501 Kellwoods 1 Townhomes POA – Waiting on flood plain development permit to schedule meeting with Division engineers.

D. StRAP:

2022 Funds – Reallocated to 2024.

2024 Funds – Request extension by December. New River Conservancy selecting contractor. Project needs to be redesigned and re-permitted. Outlook 1 year.

2026 Funds – Funds approved by state are \$995,000. Determining County bidding process. County Commissioners approved funding.

E. EWP Updates Gina Hodges:

Right of entry forms have been mailed to landowners. We have received 1 rejection due to the issue has already been fixed. A 2nd project also fell off. The contracts for the consultants were approved by the County attorney and given to the contractors. One of the consultants is ready to move forward. The 2nd consultant is internally reviewing the contract. The contracts/consultants have been put on the docket for the County Board of Commissioners approval on 9/1/26. Gina Hodges to attend meeting. Hodges has been meeting with homeowners on concerns how to expand, mitigate flooding and stream healthier. Hodges was interviewed by Grown NC. Meeting about ways to help our community to be prepared for next event. In a separate interview with the Governor's Office, Brittney Duncan, Gina Hodges was asked about the Cove Creek project and all the different entities working on it.

There was a sub-contractor meeting about a month ago along with a site visit.

NRCS Samantha Glass

Report attached. There were no funds for Stream projects last year. All Stream projects were funded this year plus two Bio-Char projects. Total FY26 funding is: \$1,251,354 + \$420,414 (pending). New this year are Technical Assistance funds. \$450000 for the entire state. There is a new State Conservationist who wants to move deadlines up.

9. NRCS Brandon Turlington

Mr. Turlington stated that he had been working on compliance field visits.

10. RC&D Report – Jonathan Hartsell No report.

11. Division Report – Elise McLaughlin

Jonathan Hartsell is leaving Blue Ridge RC&D.

DIC meeting today in Wilkesboro. Bonville to go with Ms. McLaughlin.

CET is in Greensboro October 5th-8th.

Fall Meeting is October 15th.

Young Farmer of the year deadline is 9/1/26. There is an Earth Science Workshop 9/18/26 in Wilkes County.

The Commission is asked for donations for the State Educator Position.

Burke County submitted a resolution for a legal assistant from the State. The State Commission determined that the protections already exist and the resolution was removed.

Ms. McLaughlin stated that she had to do the District Checkup in Watauga by the end of the year.

12. Administrative update – Michelle Kasey

Kasey did seed bombs at the Children's playhouse on 7/23/26.

The Watauga County Environmental Field days are 9/15 & 9/16 with rain dates of 9/17 & 9/18. All are welcome to attend.

Kasey will be helping with the Alleghany Field day on 9/3/26 and the Ashe Field Day on 9/8/26.

Watauga hosted the District Envirothon Board on 7/30/26 and served light refreshments.

The Fall Meeting is October 15th – who from the Board is going?

Denny Norris, David Tucker and Nate Coppenbarger stated they will be attending. Board suggested that Gina attend the Fall Meeting.

Kasey told the Board that David Tucker's appointed position had to be re-appointed. Bill Moretz made a motion to re-appoint David Tucker; Nate Coppenbarger 2nd. David Tucker to be re-appointed. Kasey to fill out the forms for the State.

13. Brian Bonville

Bonville spoke to the Long-Term Recovery Groups and Gina is working with them. Bonville spoke briefly about block grants and he was trained on submission of these.

He attended/spoke at a Soil Health Workshop at App State.

Bonville also attended a Stream Restoration workshop held by Blue Ridge Conservancy. Same day, he had a table at the Elk Knob Festival with brochures, and marketing.

Elise McLaughlin stated that the Ashe County Bee Festival is October 3rd in the new Ag Building.

Bonville asked the Board for permission to wear his Soil & Water hat to the Hellbender festival on 9/15/26.

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Bonville discussed cost sharing on Bio Char Waste Management wants a bio-char unit at the dump. Bonville to write up memo on benefits. He has talked to App State Bio-Char Specialists.

Samantha Glass stated that NRCS Bio-Char program requires testing and that is sometimes cost prohibitive.

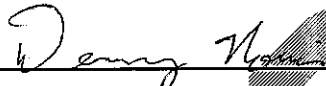
Bonville wants to use work time to try to get grant money for Waste Management. Elise McLaughlin questioned the air quality associated with an incinerator verses a biochar unit.

David Tucker made a motion to adjourn, Nate Coppenbarger 2nd.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:56 am.

Next meeting will be September 23, 2026.

Minutes submitted by: Michelle Kasey

 Signed 8-23-26 Dated _____
Denny Norris, Chair